

STATE SENATOR • RAYMOND E. BASHAM • 8TH DISTRICT

Basham Press Release

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GOVERNOR SIGNS LEGISLATION TO PROHIBIT DISRUPTION OF MILITARY FUNERALS

Basham: Grieving families entitled to privacy, respect.

LANISING- Last February, when Allen Park resident Nancy Pursley, the mother of a soldier currently serving in Iraq, read about how religious extremists were disrupting the funerals of U.S. military personnel, she contacted State Sen. Ray Basham (D-Taylor) about possible legislation to prevent it. Last month, Governor Jennifer Granholm signed into law a bill introduced by Basham that will prohibit protests within 500 feet of a military funeral service, memorial service, wake, or funeral procession.

"To compound the grief these loved ones are experiencing as they bury sons and daughters is an act of unimaginable cruelty," Basham said. "We simply cannot allow protests to disrupt the funerals of our fallen servicemen and women."

Basham's legislation became necessary due to the unfortunate actions of groups like Rev. Fred Phelps and his congregation who have been organizing loud and disruptive protests at the funeral services of American military personnel, including two such protests here in Michigan. Phelps' protesters claim the death of U.S. soldiers is God's wrath on America for its sins.

Sen. Basham's legislation was part of a bipartisan package of House and Senate bills to restrict protests and impose penalties for such disruptions.

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